

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

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St. Paul's Episcopal Church



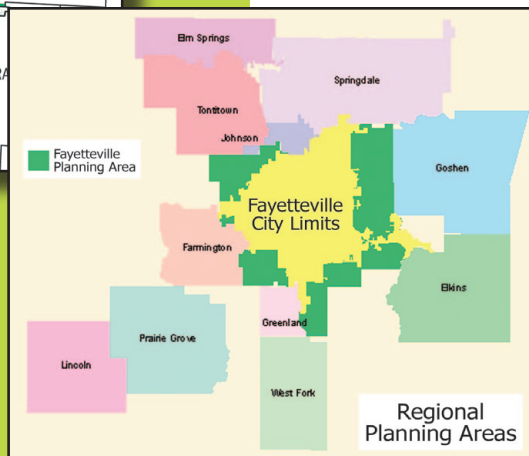
Fayetteville Adult Education



Wilson Park Castle



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2.1 Location

Fayetteville, the third most populated city in the state, is an attractive and prospering city of 73,580 people (*Source: US Census 2010*). Located in Northwest Arkansas, the city is the economic, political and cultural center of a diverse and growing region. The region, consisting of Washington and Benton counties, contains 424,404 people representing over 14.5 percent of the state's population.

Fayetteville presently occupies 55.4 square miles on the western edge of the Boston Mountains, an elevated feature of the greater Ozark Plateau extending further west and north. This modest mountainous terrain shapes the more linear north-south development pattern and intense concentration of land uses along the valley floor occupied by Fayetteville and Interstate 540.

The nearby White River provided water for early settlers, which guided growth along the western side of the White River drainage basin prior to 1970. The location of I-540 to the west and north of the city extended more recent growth into the Illinois River drainage basin. The completion of Interstate 540 and Highway 412 provides even greater attraction of growth to the west.

As the largest city in Northwest Arkansas, Fayetteville serves as the gateway to the Ozark Mountains. The growing tourism industry is one of the factors associated with the region's rapid economic development.

2.2 Planning Area

In August 2001, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission coordinated with the cities of Fayetteville, Greenland, Johnson and Farmington to revise the Planning Area boundaries for each jurisdiction.

The Planning Area is comprised of the city corporate limits and a portion of the extraterritorial jurisdiction, which extends up to 2.5 miles from the corporate limits. The total planning area is approximately 89 square miles, 55 square miles in the Fayetteville city limits and 34 square miles in the Planning Area outside the city limits.

The City of Fayetteville's expansion within the Planning Area is restricted by the immediate proximity of the cities of Springdale and Johnson to the north, Farmington and Greenland to the south.



Fayetteville, Early 1900s

Source: A Shared History: Fayetteville, Arkansas and the University of Arkansas, University of Arkansas Libraries



The role the City plays in administering and serving these two areas varies. Within the corporate limits, the City may exercise a full range of development controls and administrative functions. Within the extraterritorial jurisdiction, the City exercises joint subdivision authority with Washington County.

2.3 Fayetteville Growth Transitions

Since its establishment in the early 1800's, Fayetteville has experienced four distinguishable transitions in growth and development, each centering on major economic change. A fifth transition is emerging as a result of the more diverse economic expansion of the region.

EARLY SETTLERS. The original community of Washington, as Fayetteville was first called, was established in 1828. The name was changed a year later due to confusion with a city named Washington in southern Arkansas. Early settlers were involved in the relocation of the Cherokee Nation to the southwest. Fayetteville, being near the terminal point of the journey, became the new home for the escort party.

The McGarrah family was among Fayetteville's first settlers and laid claim to a large tract of land at the corner of Spring and Willow Streets. McGarrah's property included the southern part of what is now designated as the Washington-Willow Historic District, north to Maple Street.

In 1834, Congress authorized Washington County to sell 160 acres to underwrite the building of a proper courthouse. This 160 acres became known as the original town of Fayetteville. The city grew over the next three and half decades, and in 1870, approximately 1,200 acres were incorporated as the City of Fayetteville.

Although the early settlement period appeared to be blessed with prosperity, the community suffered through a particularly disastrous Civil War experience. Much of the original Fayetteville community was destroyed by fire during the Battle of Fayetteville on April 18, 1863.

RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD. Following the Civil War, in 1869, the McGarrah farm was bought by the Mason family, subdivided and the lots sold, referred to as the Masonic Addition. In the 1870's several homes were constructed on the large lots of the subdivision. Portions of the land were subdivided again and built on in the 1880's and thereafter.

The Masonic Addition represented Fayetteville's first reconstruction period following



Fayetteville, Early 1900s
 Source: *A Shared History: Fayetteville, Arkansas*
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 University of Arkansas Libraries



the Civil War. The initial filling in of antebellum homes began in this addition and was significant because of the many students, lawyers, administrators and faculty of the University who would make their homes here. In 1871, Fayetteville was chosen as the site of the land-grant Arkansas Industrial University. A north-south railroad was constructed through town in 1882, confirming the growth of Fayetteville's initial phase.

In the 1890's, Fayetteville established itself as a banking and distribution center and, ultimately, the hub of prosperous tourist, lumber and fruit-processing industries. It was during this period of prosperous growth that two of Fayetteville's current Historic Districts, Mt. Nord and Washington-Willow, became the area of more prestigious residences.

These districts attracted bankers, lawyers, lumber merchants, furniture manufacturers, university professors, railroad men and wholesale grocers. The homes were large and many had servants. At the turn of the century, many households rented rooms to tourists and university students.

Beginning in the 1890's, many of the large lots were again subdivided and the process of infill with smaller homes and student housing initiated.

POST-WAR INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION. Fayetteville's third transition in growth and development followed the Second World War. Approximately 60 percent of Fayetteville's residential stock was built following the depression years, with most of it coming after World War II. This was encouraged by the fact that the federal government began insuring mortgages on new homes and that building materials were plentiful and inexpensive. Also, at this time, there were few code regulations guiding the growth and development of the city. Rapid growth during this period resulted in greater demands for housing, community services, space for University of Arkansas expansion and space for parking. During this same period (1945-1958), Fayetteville experienced a rapid growth in commercial uses. New business enterprises were forced to locate along existing traffic arteries due to the lack of available space in the central business district. Some chose to locate on vacant lots between residential areas. Although these businesses were able to purchase land at more reasonable rates and to occupy larger sites, their proximity to downtown and related business enterprises was markedly diminished.

Fayetteville's first industries continued to expand during this period. It was during this phase of growth that a shift from railroad service to truck service was realized. Wholesalers, bakeries, hatcheries, repair services and other traditional commercial enterprises, once located along the railroad but needing space and access to truck routes, were forced to scatter to larger sites.



Fayetteville, Early 1900s
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The transition in industry from non-durable goods to durable goods resulted in a similar need for larger sites and highway frontage versus railroad siding. Thus, industries began scattering throughout the southwest quarter of the city.

UNIVERSITY EXPANSION. The fourth major transition in growth and expansion of Fayetteville occurred between 1960 and 1970 and paralleled the expansion experienced by the University of Arkansas. From 1960 to 1965, the University doubled in enrollment, creating an unanticipated demand for dormitories, apartments and small houses near the campus. The initial market reaction to this demand resulted in numerous conversions of older homes and garages near campus into boarding houses and apartments.

When the large-scale multi-family housing boom occurred, most were built within existing residential areas that were near the University. The growth that accompanied the University's expansion created an even greater demand for commercial services. New commercial establishments, in response to the increased demand, began locating outside the traditional center. Due to the sloping topography on either side, new establishments located in narrow bands along existing major streets, creating the first commercial strip.

NEW ERA. Between 1970 and 1990, Fayetteville grew at a fairly steady rate of 1.6 to 1.9 percent per year. Between 1990 and 2000, Fayetteville grew at an annual compound rate of 3.2 percent, and between 2000 and 2010 at a rate of 2.4%. Residential, commercial and industrial uses have all experienced significant increases. Subdivision and large-scale development activity indicate that the area is entering a new era of growth, one based on expansion of the region as a whole. Meanwhile, the University of Arkansas, who in 2010 experienced its largest numerical enrollment increase since 1946, continues to have a major impact on attracting residents, students and professionals to the city. The effect on the local economy derived from the University's presence has a supporting and stabilizing effect on the community-at-large. The University has also attracted specialized community activities that enable Fayetteville to remain the cultural center of the region. The most notable of these is the Walton Arts Center, which has given new emphasis to the link between the University and downtown and between the region and downtown in general.

Recently, Fayetteville has experienced a more active role on both the public and private level in revitalizing and preserving the character of its past. This effort brings the current development phase full circle as planning for the future builds upon the community's rich heritage. Both new and old play a vital role in the community's success.



Walmart Corporate Headquarters



Tyson Foods Corporate Headquarters



2.4 Regional Growth Transitions

Historically, the smaller communities within Washington County and Northwest Arkansas have served as semi-autonomous incorporations, providing the basic needs of the mostly residential occupants. Fayetteville, with 37 percent of the County's population, plus the location of the University of Arkansas, served as the governmental, economic, and cultural center of the area.

FAYETTEVILLE-SPRINGDALE TRANSITION. The traditional relationship of urban center and surrounding smaller communities began a transition that became somewhat noticeable by 1970 and dramatically evident by 1980. It was first marked by the emergence of Springdale as a major employment center with 3,700 new jobs added between 1970 and 1980, compared to 4,600 for the much larger Fayetteville. The figures suggested the emergence of a twin-cities economy between Fayetteville and Springdale.

Population during the same period showed a similar pattern: Springdale, with an increase of 5,994, rose from 18 to 23 percent of the County total, while Fayetteville's increase of 5,430 dropped it from 36 to 35 percent of the total. The U.S. Bureau of the Census recognized this new status when it identified the two cities as the Fayetteville-Springdale Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in 1980.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS REGION TRANSITION. The second metamorphosis of the area started in the 1990's with the regionalization of Northwest Arkansas, consisting predominantly of Washington and Benton counties. The entire region is becoming a more diversified and integrated economic unit through the expansion of tourism, Wal-Mart and related services, and the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport. Between 1990 and 2000, Washington County's population increased by 44,306, or 39.1 percent and Benton County's increased by 55,907, or 57.3 percent. In 1990, the U.S. Bureau of the Census once again recognized the significant growth in Fayetteville and surrounding areas by changing the metropolitan statistical area name to Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA. The 2010 Census shows that Benton County is now the more populous county with 221,339 people compared to 203,065 people in Washington county.

This newly gained regional status means that all of the cities of the region are now both competitors and partners in attracting significant economic growth. Having achieved the threshold level of a major economic center due to their joint size and resources, each are now catalysts for one another's development. Whereas larger industries may have previously looked at labor force and other production resources of individual cities as limited, the now combined resources are attracting national attention.